

THE BEACON



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

APRIL 2005



In This Issue:

- 2005 Homeland Security Grants Announced
- NIMS Adoption
- 5-Year Reflection
- Region 23 Exercise
- NAEM, NACO, NEMA

GOVERNOR HEINEMAN ANNOUNCES 2005 HOMELAND SECURITY GRANTS

Governor Dave Heineman, on a swing across Nebraska April 22, announced the distribution of more than \$23 million in federal funds as part of the 2005 Homeland Security grant allocations.

"I want Nebraskans to know that these grants have a direct impact on public safety," Gov. Heineman said.

"This funding makes a real difference in helping first responders communicate more effectively. That ability to communicate translates into time, and those extra moments can make a life or death difference in an emergency."

The Governor was joined by Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy, Nebraska's homeland security director, in announcing this year's grants. Nebraska received more than \$18 million outside of greater Omaha and surrounding communities, which this year were designated as a separate metropolitan security area. Most of Nebraska's federal security funds will be awarded to 75 counties in the coming days. The collaborative efforts of many of those counties are represented in 17 major communications projects throughout the state.

In addition, Douglas, Washington and Sarpy Counties will receive a combined \$5.1 million in funding as part of the Tri-County Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), which was developed to address the strategic needs of urban areas in responding to an act of terrorism, as well as natural disasters and other emergencies.

"Few states understand better than Nebraska the diverse challenges of protecting rural, urban and suburban areas," Gov. Heineman said. "This new urban initiative allows greater Omaha and surrounding communities, including those in Sarpy and Washington counties, to work together toward common goals of protection and preparedness."



Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy said, "These communications projects will continue the important work of previous years and will significantly improve local and regional interoperability. I want to commend our homeland security planning team, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and local emergency management personnel for developing these coordinated, integrated and comprehensive projects according to the Nebraska Model."

The following fall under the umbrella of major projects for the 2005 grants: Lancaster County will receive \$1 million to provide interoperable communications equipment to Lincoln and Lancaster County first responders, including wireless data equipment that supports GIS mobile mapping. Dodge County will receive \$348,000 to upgrade its communications system and integrate with Douglas, Washington and Saunders Counties. Washington and Sarpy Counties will each receive \$110,000 to expand coverage and integrate with Douglas County's communications system. Saunders County will receive \$75,000 to continue expanding its coverage and integrate with Douglas, Lancaster and Sarpy County systems.

(continued on page 3)

Governor Heineman *(continued from page 2)*

The southeast Nebraska Counties of Cass, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, and Richardson will receive \$741,000 to continue upgrades to communications capa-



The Governor made a stop in southwest Nebraska to make an announcement at McCook Community College.

bilities. Funding will also be used to link to the Douglas County and OPPD communications systems.

The northeast area of Cedar, Dakota, Dixon, Knox, Thurston, and Wayne Counties will receive \$1.9 million to begin building a communications system to unite this six-county region, as well as allow for interoperability with other Nebraska and South Dakota first-responders. Antelope, Madison, Pierce, and Stanton Counties will receive \$841,000 to expand coverage and develop interoperability within the region and with adjacent regions. Platte County will receive \$381,000 to upgrade and integrate with counties in nearby regions.

The north central area of Boyd, Brown, Holt, and Rock Counties will receive \$451,000 to update and expand communications systems and improve interoperability in the Sandhills region.

Cherry and Keya Paha Counties will receive \$226,000 to enhance communications and expand interoperability with regional neighbors and South Dakota.

The central Nebraska region of Adams, Buffalo, Dawson, Franklin, Frontier, Gosper, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Kearney, Lincoln, Nuckolls, Phelps, and Webster Counties will receive \$1.7 million to continue developing regional interoperability and coordinate with a greater number of counties in south-central and south-western Nebraska. Hooker, McPherson, Thomas, Logan, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler, Valley, Greeley, Custer and Sherman Counties will receive \$693,000 to continue enhancing their communications systems and to further enhance interoperability within the region.

The southwest Nebraska area Counties of Chase, Dundy, Furnas, Hitchcock, Perkins, and Red Willow will receive \$1.2 million to expand coverage and coordinate with the central Nebraska region to enhance regional interoperability across a wider area. Arthur, Grant, Keith and Counties will receive \$296,000 to upgrade and better coordinate communication with adjacent counties, significantly improving communication with the Panhandle and Sandhills parts of the state.

Scotts Bluff County will receive \$351,000 to upgrade from analog to digital technology and coordinate with Banner and Sioux Counties. The western Panhandle area of Cheyenne, Deuel, Garden, Kimball, and Morrill Counties will receive \$295,000 to continue expanding communications capabilities and improve interoperability across western Nebraska and Wyoming.

Box Butte, Dawes, Sheridan, and

(continued on page 4)

Governor Heineman *(continued from page 3)*

Sioux Counties will use \$324,000 to upgrade first responder communications equipment and communicate with officials in Wyoming and South Dakota.

As in previous years, funding was administered through two programs that call for 80 percent local distribution and 20 percent state distribution. The state's share is \$1.8 million and will be used to connect state agencies to the Nebraska State Patrol statewide dispatch system, improving law enforcement response capabilities and coordination.

Steps to upgrade the existing state communications system to link with regional systems and provide improved capabilities for state agencies also will begin this year. Of the state's total funding, \$964,000 will be directed to providing training exercises for local first responders and emergency managers. Another \$450,000 will help fund two emergency medical response teams.

This year's grants were based on assessments made by local jurisdictions prior to the 2004 Homeland Security grant program.



Governor Heineman discussed the Homeland Security Grants with his policymakers prior to the public announcement.

On the cover: NEMA's Mobile Command Post and Communications Trailer were on display for the Nebraska Association of County Officials in mid-April. See page 10 for story.

CHANGES ARE PLENTIFUL DURING AL BERNDT'S FIRST FIVE YEARS AT NEMA

NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt has turned the corner on his first five years at the helm of the state emergency management agency, and he looks back over a multitude of changes over that period.

The agency has grown in size in employee numbers, with an increase from 24 to 34 full-time employees since 2000. Those employees occupy the same physical space, though, as the underground bunker that houses the agency is not capable of expanding.

That situation will change, too, though. The Agency is in the planning stages on its way to a new facility to be built on the Nebraska Air Guard base in the northwest corner of Lincoln. The new building will house both NEMA and communication elements of the Nebraska State Patrol. Construction is slated to begin in 2006 and, barring unforeseen obstacles, should be ready for occupancy by 2008.

NEMA's mission has shifted considerably since 2000, due in large part to the events of September 11, 2001. As in the pre-9/11 days, NEMA is responsible for the management of the response to natural emergencies across the state of Nebraska. Homeland Security issues, however, have dramatically broadened the scope of NEMA's functions. Millions of dollars of Homeland Security dollars have been allocated for training and preparedness activities in Nebraska, and NEMA is the agency through which those dollars flow.

In the five years just passed NEMA has changed structurally and in its procedures. Grants administration has taken a primary role in the makeup and operation of the Agency. Homeland Security funding is tied strongly to exercise and training programs, and an entire division has rapidly grown to create and administer those programs in the state of Nebraska.

In 2003 NEMA added six Exercise Training Officers to handle this aspect of

the agency's mission.

The advent of the Homeland Security program has also brought about the creation of the Governor's Administrative Group, the Governor's Policy Group, the Wildfire Coordinating Council and the Nebraska Emergency Management Training Academy.

Since 2000 the Agency has substantially changed its policies and procedures, and has created a comprehensive set of Standard Operating Procedures, or SOPs, that define all aspects of agency functions. NEMA has added Mission Statements and goals and objectives that did not exist prior to this period.

Agency equipment and capabilities have seen a major upswing, also. Much new communications equipment has been put into place, along with a new Mobile Command Vehicle, a new Communications Trailer and new ancillary and support equipment.

The heart of the Agency continues to be its people. Along with the addition of ten new positions within NEMA, the Agency has seen a number of familiar faces walk out the door. Among those who have served NEMA and moved on within the past five years are: Ralph Medina, Tim Hergenrader, Nancy Booe, Dennis Svoboda, Nate Swanson, Lina Ansary, Viena Kose, Sara Hartzell, Dennis Colsden, Rich Faulkner, Joe Hinton, Lela Lowery, Kim Helmink, Marilyn Nunn, Susan Koch, Rex Wamsley, Steve Vodiska, Eric Plautz, Kathy Davis and Sharon Liske.



A handwritten signature of Al Berndt in black ink. The signature is stylized, with the first letters of the first and last names being prominent.

NEMA ADOPTS NEW DRIVING COURSE

As the business of emergency management becomes larger and more technological, the size and complexity of the tools required also increases. NEMA has added to its presence throughout the state with a 40-foot Mobile Command Center, a number of trailers, and newer and larger vehicles.

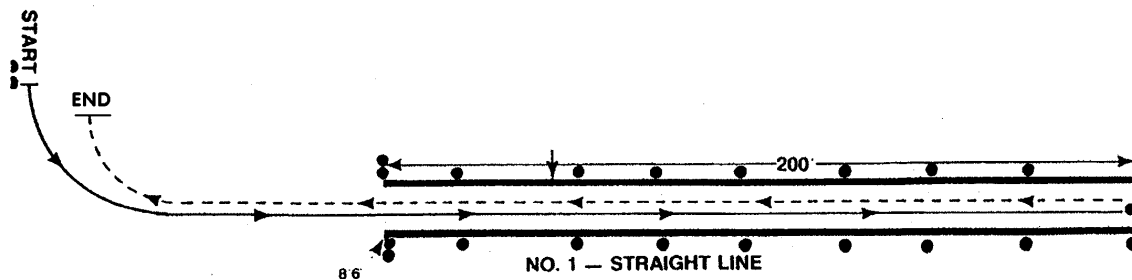


As a result, the agency is instituting a Hands-on Driver Training program that will provide the skills NEMA personnel will need to drive vehicles larger than a passenger car for exercise or disaster use.

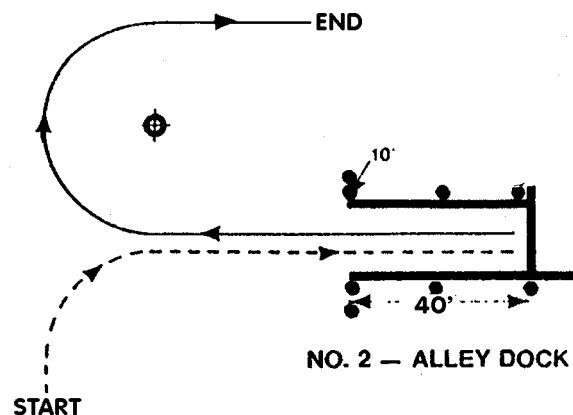
The vehicle course, referred to as a Rodeo, is adopted from the National Fire Academy Emergency Vehicle Driver Course, and is official at NEMA as of April 25 2005. For purposes of the course, the vehicle will contain a driver and a navigator. The navigator's job is to monitor the radio via which instructions will be transmitted to the driver.

There are seven components to the course:

1. Straight Line. The driver will drive the vehicle down a straight line within a 10-foot width for 200 feet, and then will back up the same track.



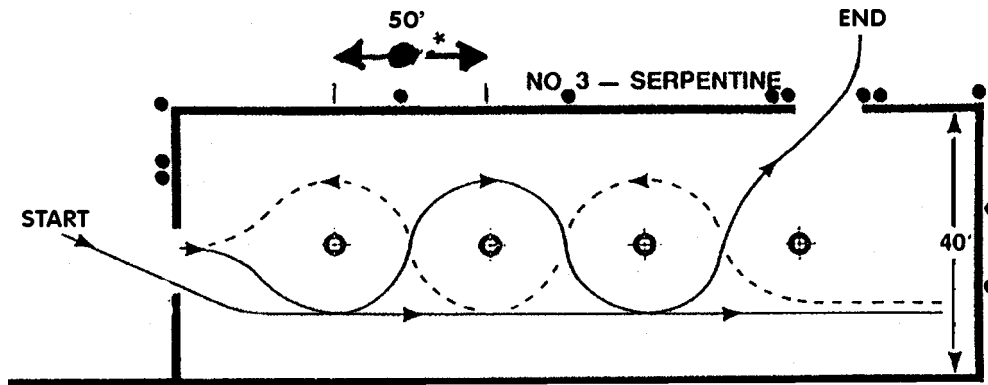
2. Alley Dock. The driver will back the vehicle into a 10-foot-wide dock that is 40 feet in depth.



(continued on page 7)

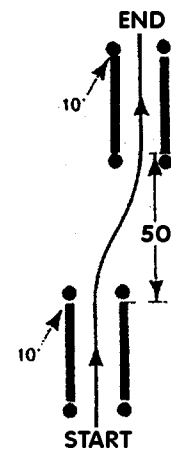
Driving course (continued from page 6)

3. Serpentine. This course consists of four cones spaced 50 feet apart in a 40-foot-wide area. The driver will drive down the right side to 50 feet past the last cone, and then back around the cones in a serpentine fashion. Once the last cone is passed, the driver will then drive forward through the cones in a serpentine fashion and exit the course.

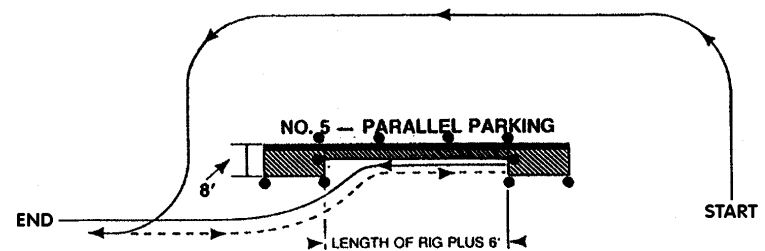


4. Offset Alley. The driver will drive through two offset alleyways of traffic cones, 40 feet in length and 40 feet apart.

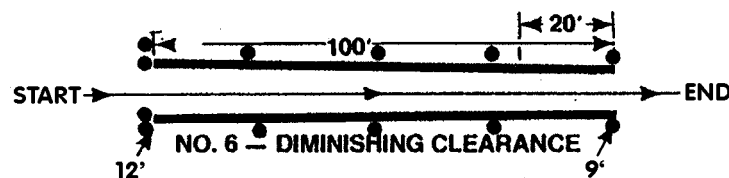
NO. 4 — OFFSET ALLEY



5. Parallel Parking. The driver will drive 40 feet past cones set six feet longer than the length of the vehicle, then park in the stall indicated by the cones. Once parked, the driver will then, on instruction of the course administrator, pull out of parking area and exit the course.



6. Diminishing Clearance. The driver will drive through a 100-foot course that begins at 12 feet in width and reduces to nine feet in width over a 100-foot length.



7. Road Course. This course will be determined by the course administrator, and will include interstate, highway, residential and business-are driving, and will also integrate soft surface (gravel and dirt) road conditions.

REGION 23 CONDUCTS TABLETOP EXERCISE

Regional EOC and communications are focus of training session.

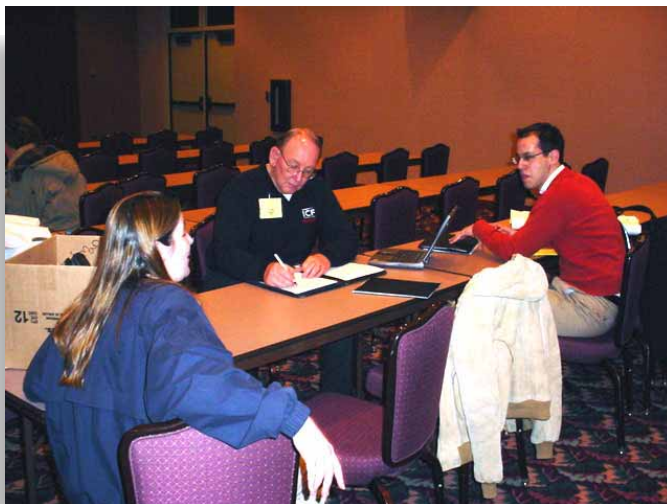
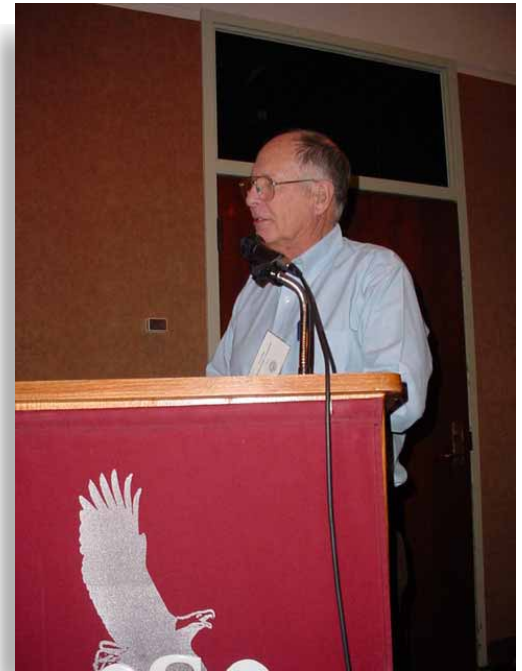
Region 23 (consisting of Dawes, Sheridan, Sioux and Box Butte Counties), under the direction of Region 23 Director Nan Thornton, conducted their tabletop exercise on March 30 2005. The exercise attracted a large turnout, with 93 participants registered, including elected officials from all four counties and a city mayor. Several local newspapers and radio stations covered the exercise.



The tabletop focused on a health-related disaster which would prompt the need for the SNS (strategic national stockpile). There were three functional groups including Rescue/First Responders, Health, and Emergency Management/Policy.

The main objective of the exercise was to determine some policies for activation of a regional EOC and discuss communication among the four counties.

The exercise was conducted by ICF with support from NEMA staff, who pointed out the value of the exercise development training that was conducted in Chadron this past February. Lessons learned in that training assisted the design team greatly with the creation of the tabletop.



IT'S NOT JUST A GOOD IDEA...

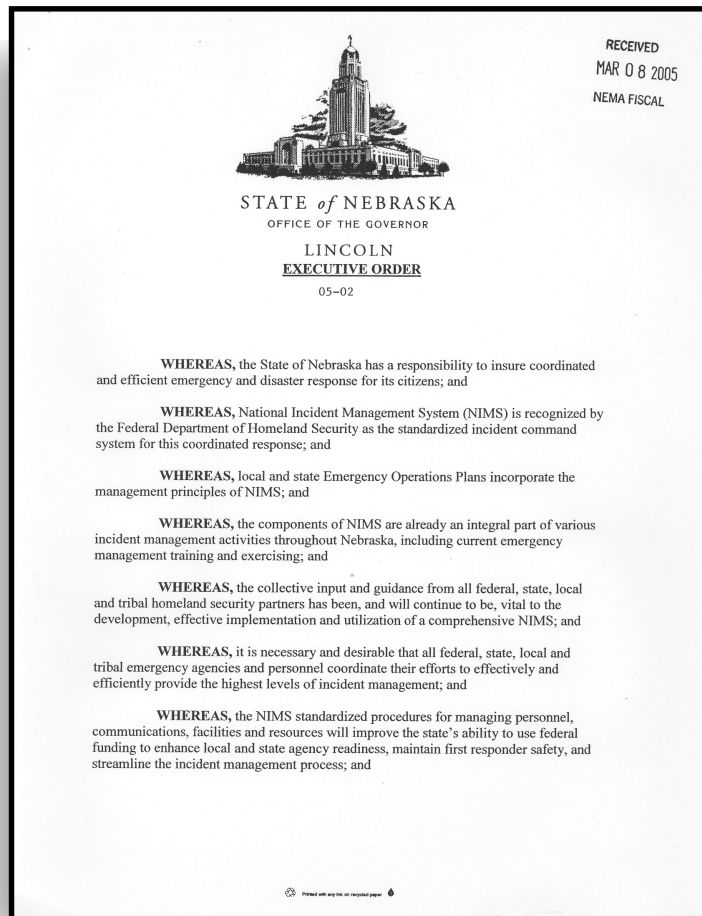
NIMS is the law of the land for emergency and disaster response.

There's a new button on the NEMA website, and it reads "NIMS". This button should get a good workout from all those involved in emergency management in the state of Nebraska.

On the fourth of March, 2005 Governor Heineman issued Executive Order 05-02 declaring NIMS the standard in the state. Entities involved in emergency management must realize that their continued operation and funding will hinge on adoption of the National Incident Management System. This program is mandated by Homeland Security Directive (HSPD)-5, and the program's position in Nebraska is essentially condensed into one paragraph in the Executive Order:

"NOW, THEREFORE, I, Dave Heineman, Governor of the State of Nebraska, under provisions of RRS 81-829.40, do hereby direct the adoption of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) by all appropriate entities in the State by October, 2005. NIMS will be the accepted standard to guide emergency and disaster

response by all 1st responders and adherence will be expected."



On April 4th, 2005, Lt. Governor Sheehy and the Policy Group, with the Homeland Security Director, approved the baseline requirements for the NIMS Training and the NIMS Implementation Plan as being the initial requirements for basic NIMS Certification. Following the "NIMS" button on the NEMA website will lead you to guides, policies, power points, tips and hints on the NIMS process.

This is the official NIMS website for the State of Nebraska, and is a one-stop shopping center for all your NIMS compliance needs. Use it well, and use it often as you bring your operation into NIMS compliance. If you have any questions regarding this site and its contents, please contact Henry Tamasi at henry.tamasi@ne.ngb.army.mil.

Check out the new NIMS button at <http://www.nebema.org>

NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY OFFICIALS GET TOUR OF NEMA, GUARD CAPABILITIES

Representatives of the Nebraska Association of County Officials, in Lincoln for their annual meeting, took advantage of their proximity and toured the facilities and equipment at the Nebraska Air National Guard base. The tour was especially designed for them to pull together the capabilities of NEMA, the Army National Guard and the Air Guard in one place, to give them a feeling for the support that is available to them should the need arise.

After an orientation in the theater by the three support organizations, the officials toured the ramp at the base to look at aircraft, ground vehicles, the Civil Support Team's response and decon equipment, and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency's Mobile Command Post and Communications Trailer.



NEMA's Henry Tamasi (left) and DeWayne Morrow deliver an orientation on the Agency's capabilities to members of the Nebraska Association of County Officials.



NAEM ANNUAL CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON STAYING ALIVE

The Nebraska Association of Emergency Management (NAEM) met in Grand Island April 15 - 17. The theme of the annual conference was "Staying Alive in 2005".

On the program was an eclectic assortment of speakers covering all aspects of emergency management in the state of Nebraska.

The function opened with a welcome by the Mayor of Grand Island and an address on "Homeland Security in 2005" by Nebraska Lt. Governor Richard Sheehy.

During the three-day event, the group was educated and entertained by a slate including:

Disaster Hits, NOW WHAT?

Georgia Welton, NEMA Disaster Assistance Specialist

State of Communications in Nebraska

Mike Jeffres, Nebraska Radio Communications Manager

Lancaster and Gage County Disaster associated with the Hallam Tornado

Doug Ahlberg and Mark Meints

Open Forum - Public Health Emergency Response Coordinators

Preventing/Responding to School Tragedies

Dr. John Dudley

Citizen Corps in Nebraska

Susan Burton, Nebraska Volunteer Services Commission

Humorist-Cartoonist Jerry Beltz

